

Draft Small Forest Landowner Language

The Solutions Table recognizes the critical importance of small forest landowners in maintaining the health and vibrancy of rural communities and in supporting both timber-related jobs and conservation benefits. Small forest landowners are forest land owners who harvest on average less than two million board feet per year. Altogether, these land owners manage 25% (5.7 million acres) of forest land in Washington. In counties entirely within the marbled murrelet's Washington range, small forest landowners manage 1.7 million forested acres compared to DNR's land management in the same counties of 1.2 million forested acres.

Strong, mutually supportive working relationships need to be built among:

- Small forest landowners
- All the agencies that regulate small forest landowners' activities (including, but not only, DNR)
- Non-governmental organizations engaged with public policy on forests and forestry

In addition, specific steps should be taken to expand awareness of the importance of small forest landowners to rural communities, timber-related jobs, and conservation outcomes, improving their "social license" to actively manage their forestlands.

We recommend that DNR work with small forest landowners to better understand their circumstances and develop a clear strategy to effectively support and incentivize them to maintain and actively manage their forest land for timber-harvest and conservation benefits.

To reduce confusion and duplication of effort, we encourage DNR to undertake this work in collaboration with other organizations that are actively working to assist small forest landowners including, but not limited to: Washington State University Extension Forestry Program, Washington State Conservation Commission and Conservation Districts, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program), Washington Farm Forestry Association, and Cascades to Coast Landscape Collaborative. The assessment should include consideration of appropriate policy, regulatory, and financial support mechanisms such as: regulatory reform, direct assistance and incentive programs, public awareness and outreach, infrastructure and logistical support (e.g., by making replanting stock available), and safe harbor programs.

The Solutions Table strongly encourages the State Legislature to improve funding for DNR's small forest landowner programs and for the Family Forest Fish Passage Program that is jointly administered by DNR, WDFW, and Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office.